

# **Alleys and R-8 zones**

## **Standards for location of parking areas and vehicle access**

Planning Commission  
March 26, 2008

# **Alleys and R-8 zones**

## **Issue:**

Should new projects in Residential-8 (R-8) zones that abut an alley right-of-way be required to:

- locate all parking in the rear and side yard area, and
- have vehicular access to the parking area through the use of the alley?

# Background

- Staff briefed the Commission on February 13, and was asked to locate alleys (developed and undeveloped) in R-8 zones and use Comprehensive Plan Policy CD-13 as a guide for a recommendation.
- Current development standards do not have requirements for using an alley as part of parking or access as do other residential zones
- Alley right-of-ways are located throughout the city including areas of Highlands, Kenneydale, North Renton, and Renton Hill areas.

# Background

Alley Definition:

A vehicular right-of-way not over 30 feet wide which is not designed for general travel and primarily used as means of vehicular and pedestrian access to the rear of abutting properties.

# Current Development Standards for R-8 Zone

New projects that abut an alley do not have to take the alley into consideration, this can allow:

- Neighborhood character to change
- Vehicles, garages, and driveways to be located between homes and streets
- Additional curb cuts
- Street parking reduction
- Additional stormwater run-off
- Reduction in quality of pedestrian safety
- Breaks up continuous uninterrupted sidewalks and walkways
- Increase in vehicle speed through neighborhood
- Private thru streets
- Alley right-of-ways not to be utilized

# Current Development Standards for R-8 Zone



# Policy Review

Guiding Community Design Element  
Policy in the Comprehensive Plan



**Policy CD-13:** Infill development should be reflective of the existing character of established neighborhoods even when designed using different architectural styles, and/or responding to more urban setbacks, height or lot requirements. Infill development should draw on elements of existing development such as placement of structures, vegetation, and location of entries and walkways, to reflect the site planning and scale of existing areas.

# Code Language

## Examples from Other Zones

- 1) All parking shall be provided in the rear yard when alley access is available (*R-10 and R-14*),
- 2) All parking shall be provided in the rear portion of the yard, and access shall be taken from the alley (*RMT*), and
- 3) No surface parking shall be located between a building and the front property line and that parking lots and garages shall be accessed from alleys when available (*Urban Design Overlay*)

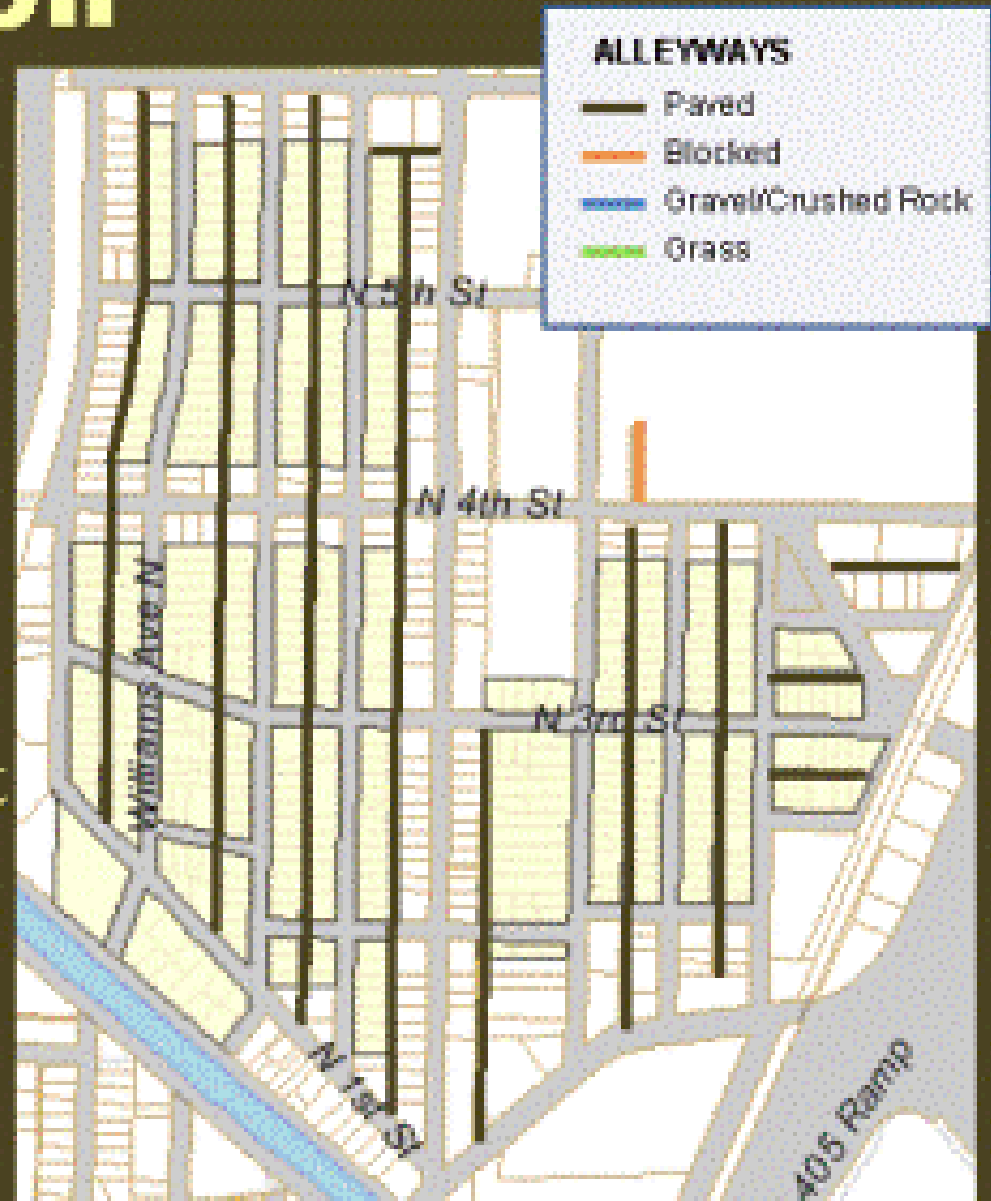


# Locating Alleys and Creating Criteria

- Staff reviewed plats, maps, right-of-way vacations, and other available data to locate existing alley right-of-ways in the R-8 zone.
- Focus of research and recommendation is on properties with two (2) vehicular access points, one being an abutting alley.
- Alleys have different surfaces like grass, gravel/crushed rock, asphalt or a mixture.
- There are blocked alleyways to consider.

# North Renton

- Alleys are utilized
- Most homes use alleys for vehicular access
- Examples of new projects that use the alley and examples of new projects that do not
- Developed sidewalk system



# North Renton



# North Renton





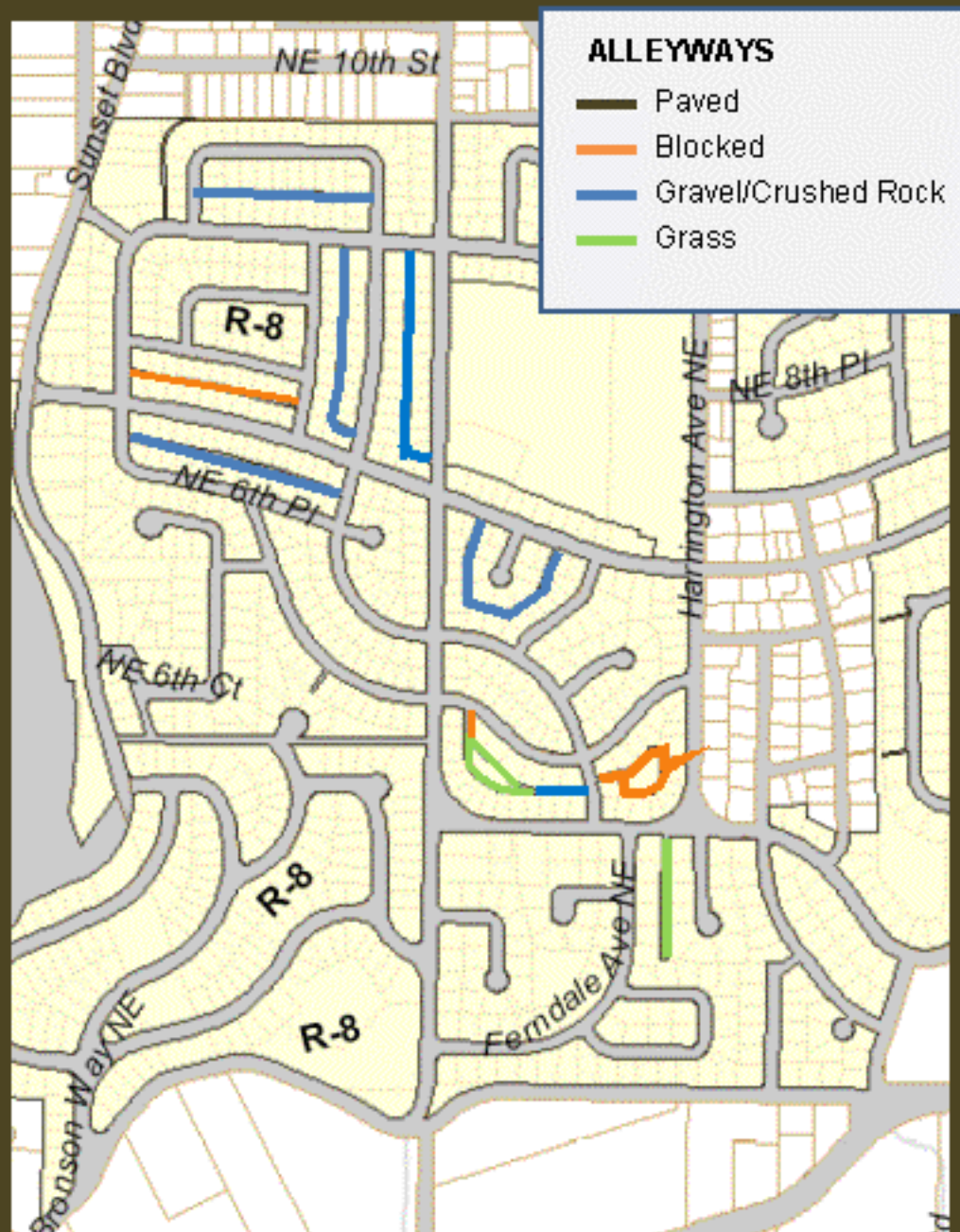
# North Renton



**Area Street**

# Highlands

- Some platted alleys have been vacated
- Alleys are less utilized as compared with other areas
- Most homes currently have driveways from street
- Some sidewalks





# Highlands



# Highlands





# Highlands



**Area Streets**

# Kennydale

- Some undeveloped alleys have been vacated
- Un-blocked alleys are utilized
- Examples of garages and parking areas off alley, including newer projects
- Topography may have discouraged alley development
- Few sidewalks



# Kennydale



# Kennydale



# Kennydale



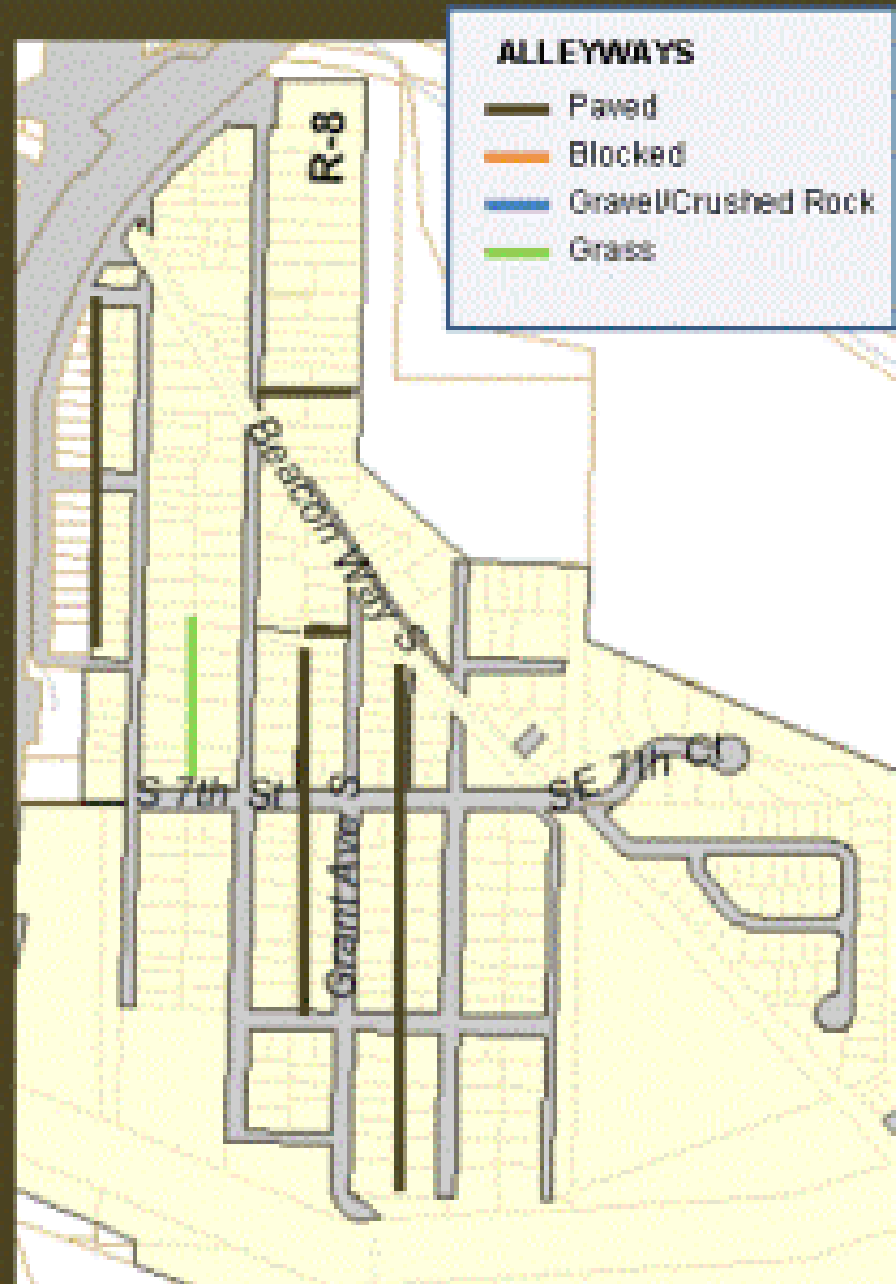
# Kennydale



**Area Streets**

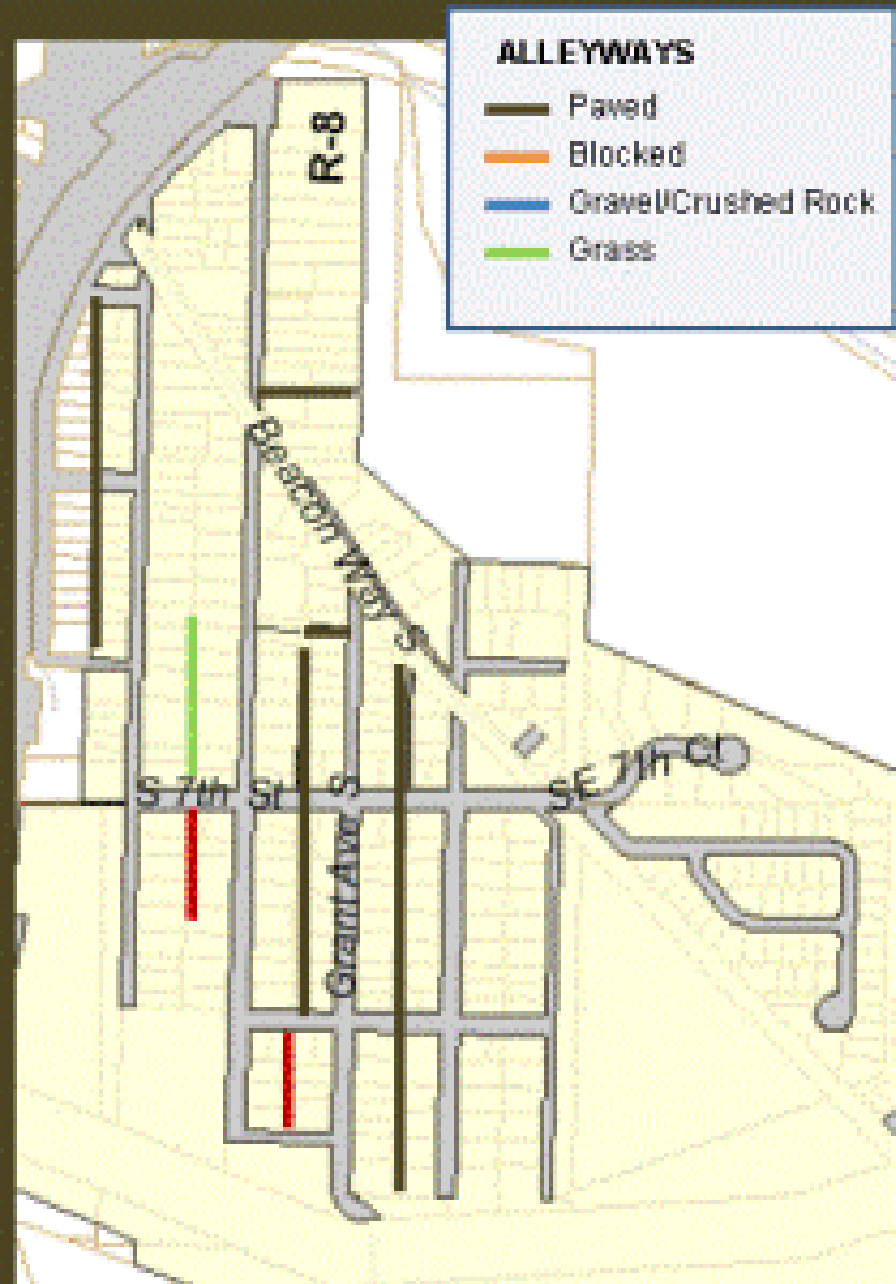
# Renton Hill

- Public and Private Alleys
- Alleys are utilized
- Examples of garages and parking areas off alley
- Topography may discourage use of street access by vehicle in some cases
- Some sidewalks



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# Renton Hill



# Renton Hill



# Renton Hill



# Renton Hill



**Area Streets**

# Recommendation

Add parking and loading development standards to properties that abut alleys, in the R-8 zone, with a paved and/or crushed rock surface.

- The focus is on alleys accessible by vehicles.
- Adding development standards will maintain or improve established neighborhood character, maintain safe pedestrian environments, keep valued on-street parking spaces, and utilize the city's entire transit network.
- This recommendation is in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan.

# Recommended Code Language

Standards will require all parking to be provided in the rear or side yard and vehicular access to be taken from the alley.

# **Recommended Code Language**

**For lots abutting an alley with paved and/or crushed rock surfacing:**

All parking areas and/or attached or detached garages may not occur in front of the building and/or in the area between the front lot line and the front building line; parking areas and garages must occur at the rear or side of the property, and vehicular access shall be taken from the alley.